

# THE IRON WHALE



A  
FLEETWAY  
LIBRARY

**WAR**  
**PICTURE**  
**LIBRARY**  
No 737

**6p**

**ALSO ON SALE NOW**

# **BATTLE**

## **PICTURE LIBRARY**

- No. 609 STEADY, THE  
GUARDS!  
No. 610 GO OUT  
FIGHTING!  
No. 611 FLASH-POINT  
No. 612 TURRET  
GUNNER  
No. 613 NO MAN'S LAND  
No. 614 ESCAPE ROUTE  
No. 615 STRIKE  
SQUADRON  
No. 616 THE HATED  
BREED

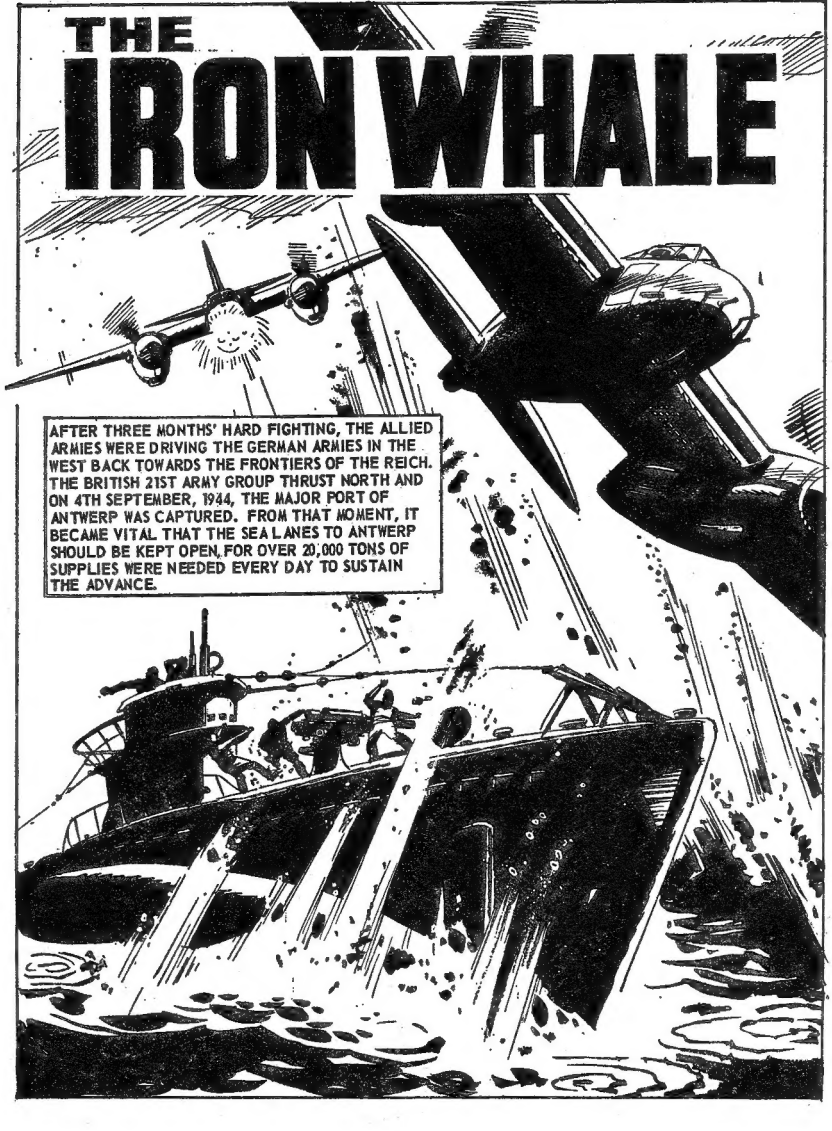
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**ALL ACTION ISSUES  
ARE ON SALE  
EVERY MONTH**

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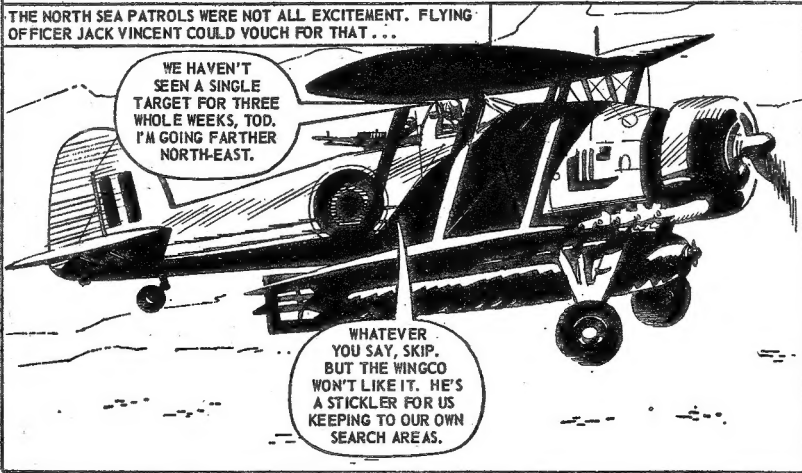
# THE IRON WHALE



AFTER THREE MONTHS' HARD FIGHTING, THE ALLIED ARMIES WERE DRIVING THE GERMAN ARMIES IN THE WEST BACK TOWARDS THE FRONTIERS OF THE REICH. THE BRITISH 21ST ARMY GROUP THRUST NORTH AND ON 4TH SEPTEMBER, 1944, THE MAJOR PORT OF ANTWERP WAS CAPTURED. FROM THAT MOMENT, IT BECAME VITAL THAT THE SEA LANES TO ANTWERP SHOULD BE KEPT OPEN, FOR OVER 20,000 TONS OF SUPPLIES WERE NEEDED EVERY DAY TO SUSTAIN THE ADVANCE.


## Chapter I. MYSTERY ISLAND

THE NORTH SEA PATROLS WERE NOT ALL EXCITEMENT. FLYING OFFICER JACK VINCENT COULD VOUCH FOR THAT ...



WE HAVEN'T  
SEEN A SINGLE  
TARGET FOR THREE  
WHOLE WEEKS, TOD.  
I'M GOING FARTHER  
NORTH-EAST.

WHATEVER  
YOU SAY, SKIP.  
BUT THE WINGCO  
WON'T LIKE IT. HE'S  
A STICKLER FOR US  
KEEPING TO OUR OWN  
SEARCH AREAS.



WE'LL TAKE A  
CHANCE ON THAT !  
IF WE BAG SOMETHING,  
THE C.O. WILL OVERLOOK  
IT - YOU'LL SEE !

VISIBILITY WAS POOR AND, AFTER A FRUITLESS SEARCH, JACK WAS ABOUT TO GO HOME IN DISGUST WHEN AN EXCITED SHOUT CAME FROM TOD BOONE, HIS OBSERVER.

HEY,  
SKIPPER -  
LOOK!

A  
SUPPLY  
SHIP! GLORY  
BE!

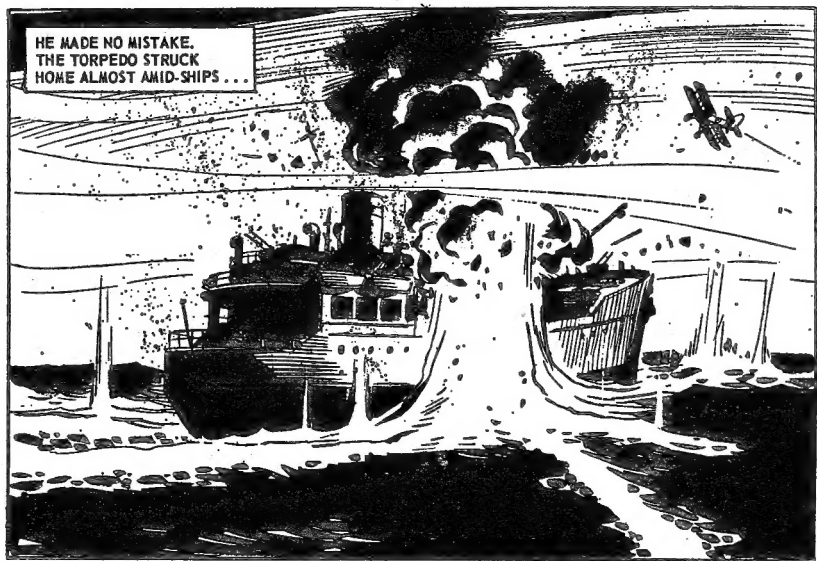
FROM THE POSITION OF THE SHIP IN RELATION TO THE DUTCH COAST, IT HAD TO BE GERMAN, AS JACK PUSHED THE STICK FORWARD - FLAK CAME UP TO CHALLENGE THE SWORDFISH...

IT'S A  
JERRY, ALL RIGHT!  
WE'LL GO STRAIGHT  
IN, TOD!

THEN JACK VINCENT HEARD A CRY FROM THE REAR COCKPIT . . .



HE MADE NO MISTAKE.  
THE TORPEDO STRUCK  
HOME ALMOST AMID-SHIPS . . .

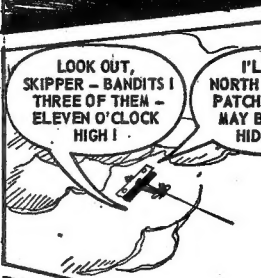




WHEN JACK CIRCLED BACK HE SAW THE SHIP HEELING OVER ...



THE  
BLIGHTER'S  
HAD IT!



LOOK OUT,  
SKIPPER - BANDITS!  
THREE OF THEM -  
ELEVEN O'CLOCK  
HIGH!

I'LL TURN  
NORTH - THERE'S A  
PATCH OF MIST WE  
MAY BE ABLE TO  
HIDE IN ...



AT A MAXIMUM SPEED OF ABOUT  
140 m.p.h., THE TORPEDO  
BOMBER PLUNGED INTO THE MIST.

THIS'LL  
SHAKE THEM  
OFF - I HOPE! YOU  
HURT BAD,  
TOD?



GOT IT IN  
THE ARM, SKIPPER  
- I'LL BE OKAY.  
DON'T WORRY!

THEN THEY WERE OUT OF THE MIST - AND THE ENEMY PLANES WERE NO LONGER IN SIGHT. TO JACK'S SURPRISE, THERE WAS AN ISLAND BELOW THEM.

'FUNNY I MUST BE ONE OF THE HEYDAAL GROUP. WE MUST BE MUCH FARTHER NORTH THAN WE THOUGHT !

SUDDENLY, A TORRENT OF LIGHT FLAK CAME POURING UP AT HIM.

HE CIRCLED AND FLEW BACK, BRAVING THE FLAK . . .

THEY'RE BUILDING SOMETHING THERE. A SHIP OF SOME KIND. LOOKS LIKE A U-BOAT - BUT IT CAN'T BE ! IT'S TOO BIG !

HECK ! THERE MUST BE SOMETHING IMPORTANT DOWN THERE TO NEED A FLAK SCREEN AS THICK AS THIS !





AS THE FLAK GREW EVEN FIERCER, HE BANKED AWAY AND HEADED TOWARDS ENGLAND . . .

AS HE APPROACHED THE ENGLISH COASTLINE, HE CALLED THE AIRFIELD ON THE WIRELESS SO THAT AN AMBULANCE WAS WAITING FOR TOD WHEN THEY LANDED.



NOT A BAD BAG - AN ENEMY SUPPLY SHIP SUNK AND A MYSTERY ISLAND BASE DISCOVERED . . .

YOU'LL BE OUT OF DOCK SOON, CHUM. THEN WE'LL GO HUNTING TOGETHER AGAIN, EH?

YOU BET, SKIPPER!



THE FOLLOWING MORNING, JACK VINCENT WAS SUMMONED BEFORE HIS COMMANDING OFFICER, GROUP CAPTAIN HALL.



I UNDERSTAND YOU WENT HARING OFF ON YOUR OWN YESTERDAY, VINCENT. YOU KNOW THE ORDERS ABOUT PATROLS, I PRESUME?

YES, SIR. I ADMIT I DID BEND THE ORDERS A LITTLE, BUT AS IT TURNED OUT, I SANK AN ENEMY SHIP, AND . . .

WHAT DO YOU MEAN -  
'BENT' THE ORDERS? YOU  
DELIBERATELY DISOBEYED THE  
ORDERS! AND THAT'S  
NOT ALL!



SICK WITH HORROR, JACK  
STUMBLED FROM THE OFFICE...

THE SHIP YOU SANK WAS THE 'ESBERG' -  
AND IT HAD TWO HUNDRED AND TEN  
BRITISH PRISONERS-OF-WAR ABOARD!  
BECAUSE YOU DISOBEYED ORDERS, TWO  
HUNDRED AND TEN OF OUR MEN DIED!

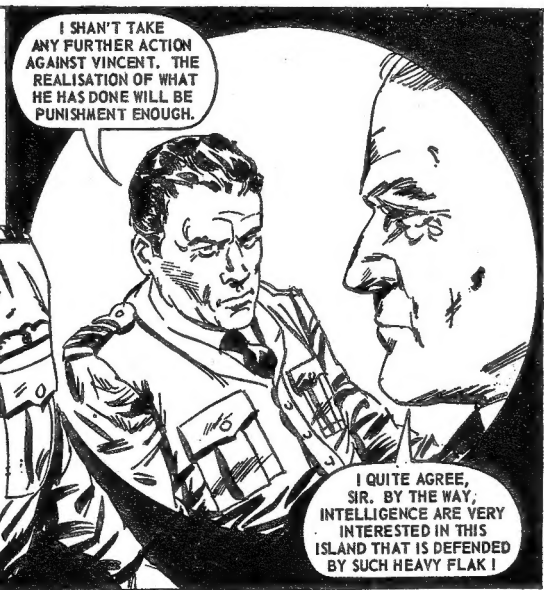


OH, NO,  
SIR!

I SHAN'T TAKE  
ANY FURTHER ACTION  
AGAINST VINCENT. THE  
REALISATION OF WHAT  
HE HAS DONE WILL BE  
PUNISHMENT ENOUGH.



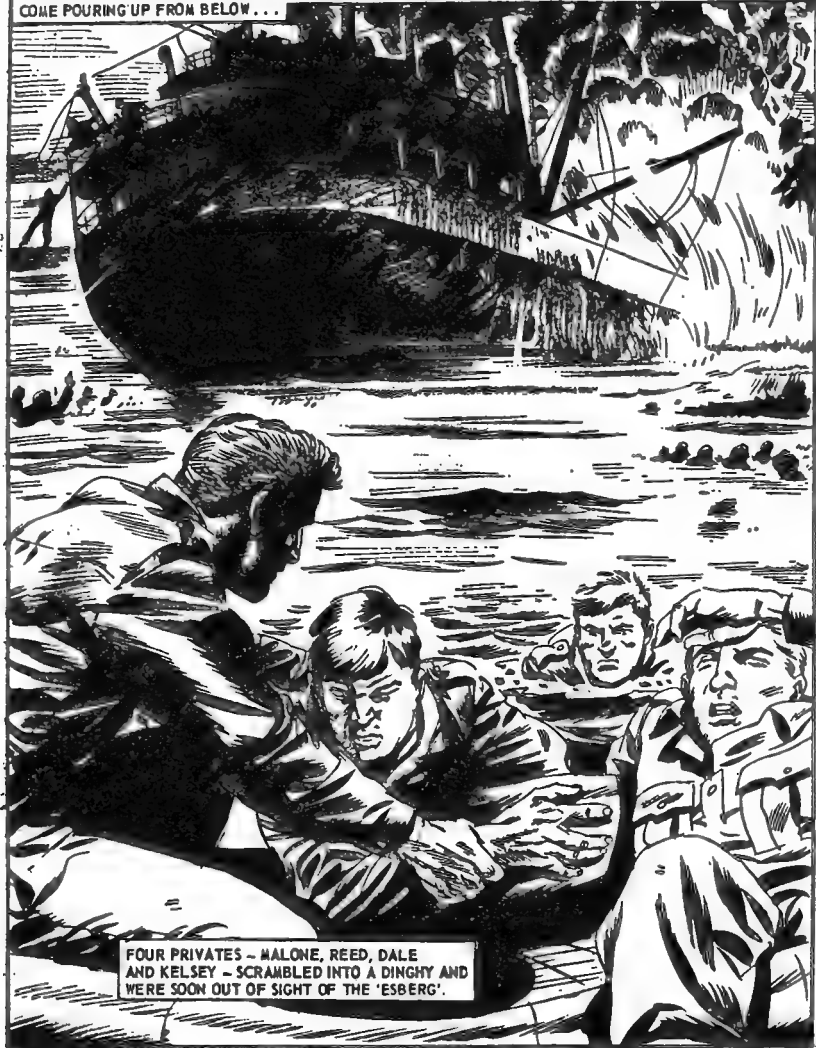
WHAT DO I DO  
NOW? WHAT CAN I DO?  
ALL THOSE MEN...



I QUITE AGREE,  
SIR. BY THE WAY,  
INTELLIGENCE ARE VERY  
INTERESTED IN THIS  
ISLAND THAT IS DEFENDED  
BY SUCH HEAVY FLAK!

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AS BRITISH INTELLIGENCE HAD LEARNED, THE 'ESBERG' HAD INDEED BEEN CARRYING PRISONERS-OF-WAR, DESTINED FOR FORCED LABOUR CAMPS IN DENMARK. WHEN THE TORPEDO STRUCK, THE PRISONERS HAD COME POURING UP FROM BELOW...



FOUR PRIVATES - MALONE, REED, DALE  
AND KELSEY - SCRAMBLED INTO A DINGHY AND  
WERE SOON OUT OF SIGHT OF THE 'ESBERG'.

MALONE, A TOUGH COMMANDO AND THE SENIOR SOLDIER, HEADED THE FLIMSY CRAFT TOWARDS THE WEST.



THE FARTHER  
WEST WE GET THE  
BETTER CHANCE WE HAVE  
OF BEING SPOTTED BY  
THE R.A.F. OR ONE OF THE  
NAVY'S PATROLS...

BUT WIND AND CURRENT WERE AGAINST THEM AND AS DAWN BROKE, THE NEXT MORNING, THEY HEARD THE CRASH OF SURF AND SAW THE WHITE SHAPE OF A LIGHTHOUSE.



THAT CAN'T BE  
THE DUTCH MAINLAND.  
IT'S AN ISLAND.

WHEREVER IT  
IS, THE JERRIES ARE  
BOUND TO BE THERE.  
AND WE'RE BEING  
CARRIED STRAIGHT  
TOWARDS IT!

WE'LL BE  
LUCKY TO GET  
THROUGH THAT  
SURF.


THE TIDE SEIZED CONTROL OF THE DINGHY AS THEY NEARED THE SHORE AND DESPITE THEIR EFFORTS, A BIG WAVE UPENDED THEM...

AAGH I



THEY WERE ALL STRONG SWIMMERS HOWEVER, AND THEY FOUGHT THEIR WAY PAST THE ROCKS AND ON TO THE SHORE. ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY WAS THE LIGHTHOUSE.

IT LOOKS  
DESERTED TO ME.  
BUT WE'D BETTER GO  
CAREFULLY...



THERE WAS NO CULTURAL CHALLENGE, NO SPITEFUL CRACK OF RIFLE FIRE...



THEY BEGAN TO EXPLORE, AND GROPED THEIR WAY INTO A CELLAR THAT WAS HEWN OUT OF THE SOLID ROCK.



LOOK AT ALL THIS! TINNED STUFF. MILK. BISCUITS. EVEN SOME BACON.

BUT THERE'S MOULD ON THOSE TINS. I BET THERE'S BEEN NO-ONE HERE FOR QUITE A WHILE.

IT WAS LEFT BY THE DUTCH LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS, I EXPECT.

JERRY CAN'T HAVE BEEN DOWN HERE, ANYWAY. HE WOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT THIS LOT.



IN THE FAR CORNER MALONE MOVED SOME BOXES AND SACKS AND FOUND A CREVICE IN THE ROCK JUST BIG ENOUGH FOR A MAN TO SQUEEZE THROUGH.



WONDER  
WHERE THIS  
LEADS TO ?

HE LED THE WAY DOWN INTO WHAT PROVED TO BE A CAVE THAT HAD A WELL-CONCEALED EXIT ON TO A NARROW BEACH.



IF THE WAR  
DON'T LAST  
TOO LONG.

THIS WILL  
MAKE A GOOD  
HIDEOUT. AND WITH  
ALL THOSE STORES WE  
COULD STAY HERE  
TILL THE END OF  
THE WAR.

AND IF THE  
JERRIES DON'T  
FIND US !

LISTEN, YOU BLOKES -  
SOMEONE'S GOT TO BE LEADER.  
I THINK I'D BETTER  
TAKE THE JOB ON.



THE HECK YOU  
WILL ! WHAT'S SO SPECIAL  
ABOUT YOU ? YOU'RE  
ONLY A PRIVATE,  
SAME AS US.

YES, DON'T  
GET SO BIG-HEADED,  
MALONE !





FOR THE REST OF THE DAY THEY SLEPT IN THE CAVE AND AFTER DARK THEY SET OUT TO EXPLORE THE ISLAND...



IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE THEY FOUND A GERMAN CAMP . . .

THE ISLAND'S  
OCCUPIED ALL RIGHT !  
WONDER WHAT THE  
JERRIES ARE DOING  
HERE ?



THEY SKIRTED THE CAMP AND HEADED TO WHERE THEY COULD HEAR THE CLANG OF RIVETTING HAMMERS AND SEE THE SUBDUED GLOW OF SHADED LIGHTS.

A U-BOAT ! BUT  
DID YOU EVER SEE  
SUCH A BIG ONE  
AS THAT ?

IT'S MORE  
LIKE A  
CRUISER !

WHAT THE  
DEVIL'S THAT  
DOING HERE ?



ON THE WAY BACK THEY WERE NEARLY SPOTTED BY A GERMAN PATROL, AND HAD TO DIVE INTO COVER . . .



BACK AT THE CAVE THEY TALKED THINGS OVER...



MALONE'S JAW HARDENED . . .

I'LL DO  
JUST THAT ! I'LL  
SHOW YOU WHAT A  
COMMANDO CAN DO !  
WHAT'S WRONG WITH  
A BIT OF GLORY,  
ANYWAY ?



BUT WHEN MALONE SET OUT ON HIS OWN, THE NEXT NIGHT, THE OTHERS  
LOOKED AT EACH OTHER SHAMEFACEDLY. — AND THEN FOLLOWED HIM.

WHAT  
DO YOU LOT  
WANT ?

WE THOUGHT WE  
MIGHT AS WELL COME  
WITH YOU — IN CASE YOU  
GOT INTO TROUBLE.



THEIR FIRST VICTIM WAS A LONE SENTRY ON A CLIFF TOP ....



IF HE GETS  
WASHED ASHORE, IT'LL  
LOOK LIKE AN  
ACCIDENT -- WITH  
ANY LUCK !



ON THE WAY BACK, THEY STOLE THREE CANS OF  
PETROL FROM A FUEL DUMP, WHILE THE SENTRY  
WAS AT THE OTHER END OF HIS BEAT...



THE NEXT NIGHT, THEY GOT TWO BOXES OF HAND GRENADES FROM AN AMMUNITION DUMP.

THIS IS A REALLY GOOD HAUL. WE CAN DO A LOT OF DAMAGE WITH A FEW GRENADES PLANTED IN THE RIGHT SPOT!



BY THE END OF THE WEEK THEY HAD COLLECTED A SMALL ARSENAL OF WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES.

THAT'S BETTER!



THE GARRISON COMMANDER, COLONEL STOLZ, AT LAST ACCEPTED THAT ENEMY SABOTEURS WERE LOOSE ON THE ISLAND. HE STORMED AT HIS ADJUTANT, HAUPTMANN SCHNEIDER . . .



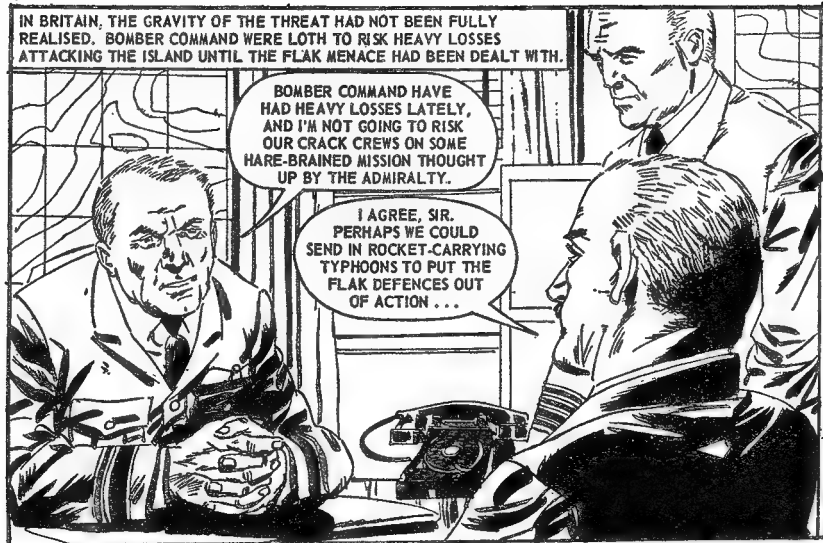


## Chapter 2. THE SABOTEURS

AT THAT MOMENT, GENERAL FRANZ DIETER, COMMANDING THE WEHRMACHT TROOPS IN NORTH WESTERN EUROPE, WAS EXPLAINING HIS PET PLAN TO A CONFERENCE OF CORPS COMMANDERS.



IN BRITAIN, THE GRAVITY OF THE THREAT HAD NOT BEEN FULLY REALISED. BOMBER COMMAND WERE LOTH TO RISK HEAVY LOSSES ATTACKING THE ISLAND UNTIL THE FLAK MENACE HAD BEEN DEALT WITH.

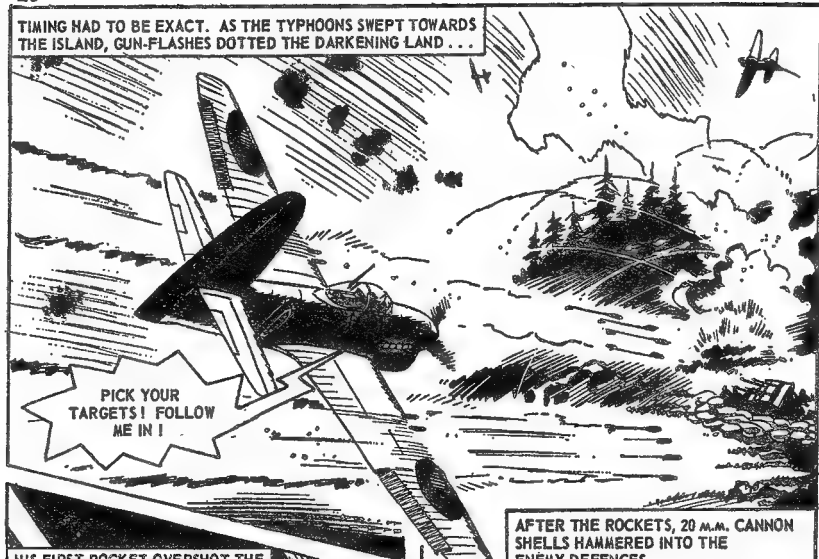




IT WAS TO BE THE TOUGHEST MISSION OF JACK'S CAREER, BUT HE FELT NO FEAR - ONLY THE URGE TO DO SOMETHING THAT WOULD BLOT OUT HIS TERRIBLE FEELING OF GUILT.



TIMING HAD TO BE EXACT. AS THE TYPHOONS SWEEP TOWARDS THE ISLAND, GUN-FLASHES DOTTED THE DARKENING LAND...



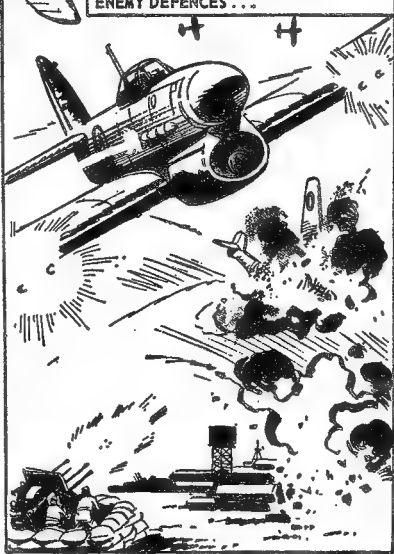
PICK YOUR  
TARGETS! FOLLOW  
ME IN!

HIS FIRST ROCKET OVERSHOT THE TARGET, BUT HE ZOOMED UP AND SWOOPED AGAIN. THE SECOND TIME THE FRANTICALLY FIRING GUNS WERE BLOTTED OUT...

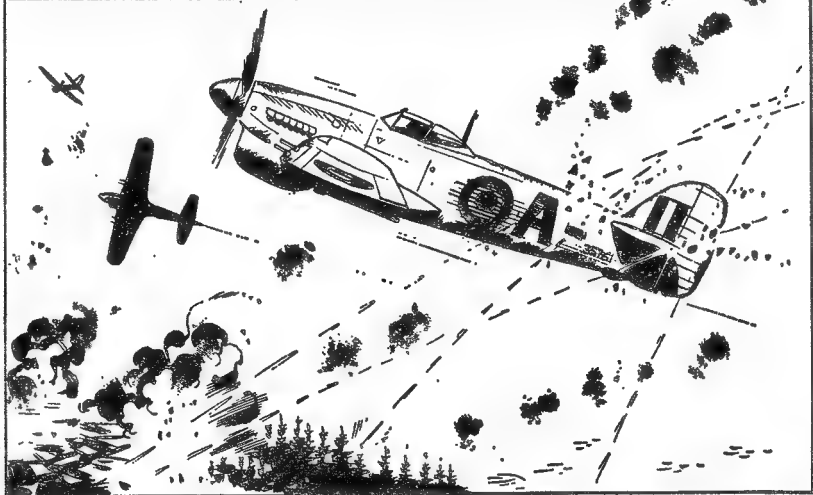


AAAAAGH!

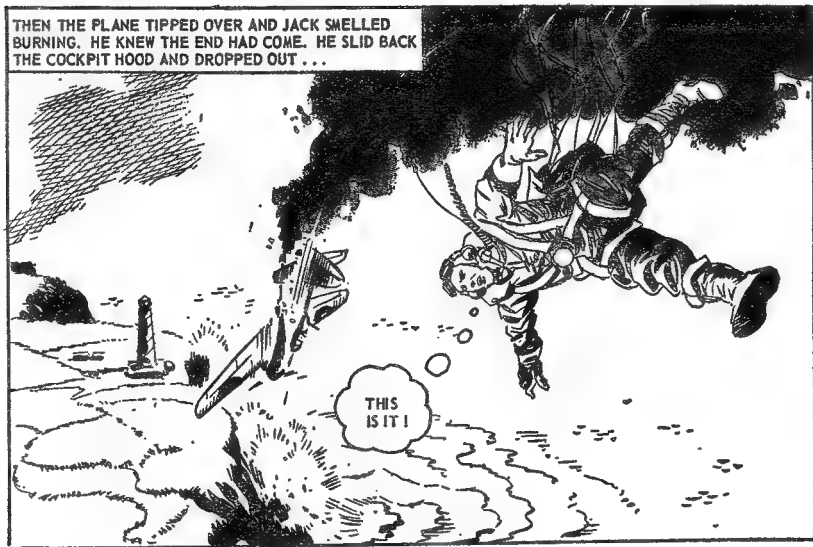
AFTER THE ROCKETS, 20 M.M. CANNON SHELLS HAMMERED INTO THE ENEMY DEFENCES...



BUT THE ENEMY WERE HITTING BACK. JACK VINCENT'S TYPHOON WAS SUDDENLY HIT. HE PULLED BACK ON THE STICK TO GAIN HEIGHT, BUT THE CONTROLS WERE SLOPPY ...



THEN THE PLANE TIPPED OVER AND JACK SMELLED BURNING. HE KNEW THE END HAD COME. HE SLID BACK THE COCKPIT HOOD AND DROPPED OUT ...



IT WAS KELSEY, AT THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE, WHO SAW THE PILOT COME DOWN IN THE SEA . . .



IT WAS SOON OBVIOUS THAT THE AIRMAN WAS IN DIFFICULTIES. KELSEY AND DALE, BOTH STRONG SWIMMERS, PLUNGED IN TO HIS RESCUE . . .



JACK, TANGLED IN HIS CHUTE, WAS NEARLY DROWNING WHEN THEY REACHED HIM . . .



LATER, RECOVERING IN THE CAVE, JACK LISTENED IN AMAZEMENT TO HIS RESCUERS' STORY...



THEY MADE NO COMMENT, BUT JUST LOOKED AT HIM...





MALONE WENT ON TO TELL HIM ABOUT THE GIANT U-BOAT, AND HOW THEY HAD COLLECTED WEAPONS.

THAT'S FINE !  
WE MUST DO OUR  
BEST TO MAKE  
THINGS AWKWARD  
FOR JERRY.

MALONE'S FACE DARKENED, AND HE SPOKE TRUCULENTLY . . .

THAT'S JUST  
WHAT WE HAVE  
BEEN DOING !

I'M SURE YOU HAVE,  
BUT WE MUST STEP UP  
THE OFFENSIVE. I'LL THINK  
UP SOMETHING SPECIAL.

WHO THE BLAZES  
D'YOU THINK YOU  
ARE ? YOU'RE AN AIRMAN,  
AND THIS IS A JOB FOR  
SOLDIERS. I'M RUNNING  
THIS SHOW !

YOU FORGET  
SOMETHING - I'M  
A COMMISSIONED  
OFFICER !



MALONE SUDDENLY RUSHED, SWINGING VICIOUSLY. COOLLY, THE YOUNG AIRMAN DUCKED UNDER MALONE'S FIST.



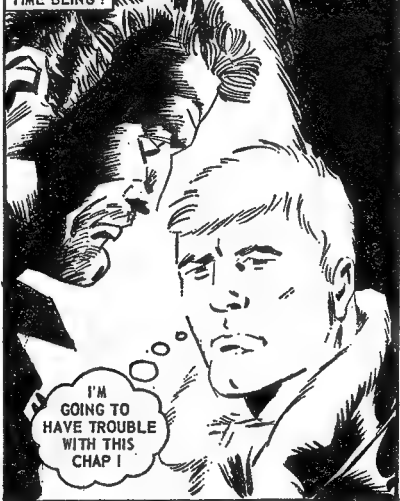
THREE TIMES, JACK VINCENT SWAYED AND DODGED OUT OF HARM'S WAY. THEN HE BROUGHT HIS OWN FIST ROUND IN A BONE-CRACKING PUNCH.



THAT WAS MARQUIS OF QUEENSBERRY STUFF, BUT IF YOU WANT TO GET REALLY ROUGH, I KNOW ALL THE DIRTY TRICKS, TOO! NOW, HAVE I MADE MY POINT?



MALONE STRUGGLED SULLENLY TO HIS FEET. JACK VINCENT KNEW HE HAD WON - FOR THE TIME BEING!



NEXT NIGHT, JACK VINCENT WANTED TO SEE THE U-BOAT FOR HIMSELF AND TOLD MALONE TO GUIDE HIM THERE. MALONE SCOWLED...



LATER...

SEE THAT SHED WITH THE ELECTRIC TRANSFORMERS OUTSIDE? THAT PROBABLY HOUSES THE GENERATORS WHERE ALL THE POWER COMES FROM. IF WE SABOTAGE THAT WE HANG UP ALL THEIR WORK!



THEY RETURNED TO THE CAVE FOR EXPLOSIVES AND HOME-MADE PETROL BOMBS AND WERE BACK NEAR THE VITAL SHED ABOUT AN HOUR BEFORE DAWN.



RIGHT, SIR.

KELSEY, WHEN WE GET CLOSER I WANT YOU TO CREEP UP AND CLOBBER THAT SENTRY. THE REST OF US WILL RUSH IN WHEN I GIVE THE SIGNAL AND THROW OUR BOMBS AND EXPLOSIVES INTO THE SHED.

ONCE AGAIN MALONE PROTESTED ...

BETTER LET ME HANDLE THAT SENTRY. I'M TRAINED IN THIS SORT OF THING - KELSEY ISN'T!

BELT UP, MALONE! I CAN HANDLE HIM AS WELL AS YOU COULD.

I'M GIVING THE ORDERS. KELSEY WILL GET THE SENTRY. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART, MALONE, YOU CAN GO BACK TO THE CAVE.



THE FACT THAT THE OTHERS WERE SIDING WITH THE OFFICER INFURIATED MALONE.



PERISHING R.A.F. BLOKE !  
WHAT DOES HE KNOW ABOUT  
THIS SORT OF SCRAPPING ?  
HE'LL RUIN EVERYTHING !

THE SABOTEURS CREEPT CLOSER, AND KELSEY STOLE UP BEHIND THE SENTRY AND STRUCK HIM A HARD BLOW AT THE BASE OF THE SKULL . . .



THE SENTRY HAD HARDLY CRUMPLED TO THE GROUND BEFORE THE OTHERS RUSHED INTO THE SHED AND HURLED THEIR BOMBS AND EXPLOSIVES . . .



AS THE ECHOES OF THE EXPLOSIONS DIED AWAY AND FLAMES SHOT SKYWARDS, THE SABOTEURS RACED OFF INTO THE DARKNESS.



THE FLAMES FROM THE BLAZING SHED THREW THE ENEMY INTO SHARP RELIEF. IT WAS A TARGET MALONE COULD NOT RESIST.




BLITZEN !  
GET THE -  
AAGH !






BULLETS SANG AROUND MALONE AS OTHER GERMANS FIRED BACK. JACK VINCENT WAS WAITING FOR HIM AS HE DASHED FOR COVER...




WHAT THE HECK  
DO YOU THINK YOU'RE  
PLAYING AT? OUR JOB IS TO  
HIT AND RUN, NOT HAVE  
A STAND-UP FIGHT! YOU  
WERE ASKING TO  
BE KILLED!



OKAY. SO I MIGHT HAVE GOT  
MYSELF KILLED, BUT THAT  
WOULD HAVE BEEN MY LOOKOUT.  
AT LEAST I WOULDN'T BE  
KILLING TWO HUNDRED OF MY  
OWN MEN!

THE THRUST WENT HOME. JACK VINCENT  
WINCED AS THOUGH HE HAD BEEN STABBED.



THE SWINE!  
IT HURTS  
MORE BECAUSE  
IT'S TRUE!

NEAR THE DUNES, A PARTY OF PRISONERS UNDER A STRONG GUARD WERE DIGGING FOUR GUN-PITS. THE SABOTEURS HAD TO MAKE A WIDE DETOUR TO AVOID THEM.

ARE THERE  
MANY OF OUR  
PRISONERS ON  
THE ISLAND ?

WE'VE SEEN  
THREE PARTIES  
ABOUT THE SIZE  
OF THAT ONE. MOST  
OF THEM ARE DIGGING  
ROADS AND PUTTING  
UP HUTS.

IN THE NIGHTS THAT FOLLOWED, JACK VINCENT KEPT A CLOSE WATCH ON THE GREAT U-BOAT FROM THE DARK HILLS...

YOU KNOW WHAT'S IN THOSE CASES, DON'T YOU ?  
EXPLOSIVES ! THAT MEANS JUST ONE THING -  
THEY'RE GOING TO BLOW IT UP SOMEWHERE !



AS USUAL, MALONE DISAGREED...

THEY'VE SPENT  
ENORMOUS LABOUR  
BUILDING IT!  
WHY THE HECK  
SHOULD THEY  
BLOW IT UP?

TO WRECK  
A PORT, PROBABLY!  
IMAGINE THAT LOT  
GOING UP AT THE  
MOUTH OF THE THAMES,  
FOR INSTANCE. WHATEVER  
IT MEANS, WE MUST  
STOP THEM!



STOP THEM?  
JUST US FIVE?  
THAT'S CRAZY!

NOT SO  
CRAZY AS YOU  
THINK. WE STAND  
A GOOD CHANCE OF  
BEING ABLE TO  
DO IT - IF WE  
HAVE TIME!



JACK VINCENT TACKLED REED, THE ENGINEER OF THE PARTY...

CAN YOU FIX  
ME A TIMING  
MECHANISM THAT  
WILL EXPLODE A  
FAIRLY HEFTY  
CHARGE OF GELIGNITE  
AT A CERTAIN INTERVAL  
AFTER IT'S  
BEEN PLANTED?

I GUESS  
I COULD, SIR -  
IF I CAN FIND  
SOME SORT OF  
CLOCKWORK  
MECHANISM...



## Chapter 3. *ONE-MAN MISSION*

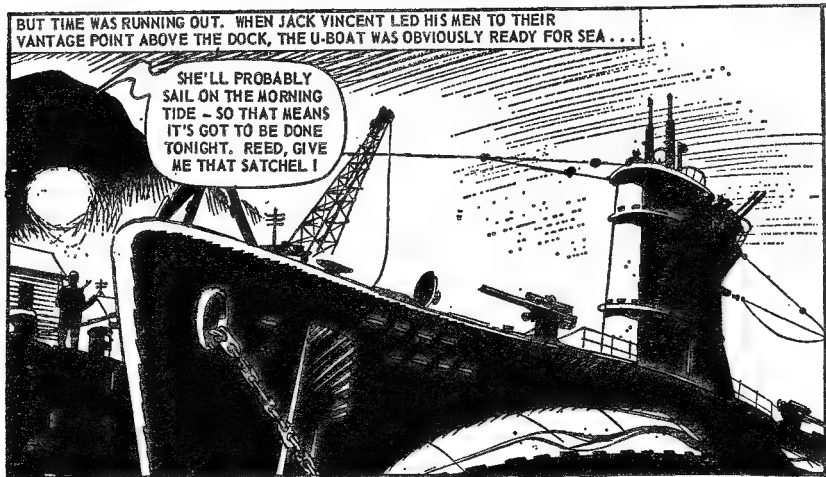
SOMEONE REMEMBERED SEEING AN OLD ALARM CLOCK IN THE LIGHTHOUSE - REED WORKED ON IT AND AT LAST ...

YOU CAN SET THIS JUST AS YOU WOULD SET AN ALARM. WHEN IT GOES OFF IT WILL IGNITE THIS FUSE WHICH I'LL ATTACH TO A GRENADE DETONATOR. WE CAN PUT THE WHOLE WORKS IN A SATCHEL OF EXPLOSIVE.



BUT TIME WAS RUNNING OUT. WHEN JACK VINCENT LED HIS MEN TO THEIR VANTAGE POINT ABOVE THE DOCK, THE U-BOAT WAS OBVIOUSLY READY FOR SEA ...

SHE'LL PROBABLY SAIL ON THE MORNING TIDE - SO THAT MEANS IT'S GOT TO BE DONE TONIGHT. REED, GIVE ME THAT SATCHEL I





THE YOUNG AIRMAN WHIRLED ON KELSEY...



THEY WATCHED HIM VANISH INTO THE SHADOWS . . .

HE'S CRAZY  
ALL RIGHT.  
IF HE WANTS THE  
GERMANS TO KILL  
HIM THEY'LL OBLIGE -  
NO DOUBT  
ABOUT THAT!

YOU THINK  
HE MEANS  
TO BLOW HIMSELF  
UP WITH THE  
U-BOAT?

SHOULDN'T  
BE  
SURPRISED.



SUDDENLY, A FIGURE LOOMED OUT OF THE DARKNESS. TOO LATE THEY SAW THAT IT WAS A GERMAN.

HALT!  
WHO ARE  
YOU?



THE GERMAN'S SCHMEISSER WAS COVERING THEM AT ALMOST POINT BLANK RANGE. EVEN MALONE HAD TO ADMIT THAT THEY WERE HELPLESS . . .



AT THAT MOMENT, ANOTHER FIGURE CAME UP BEHIND THE GERMAN SOLDIER. A HEAVY SPADE SWUNG THROUGH THE AIR . . .



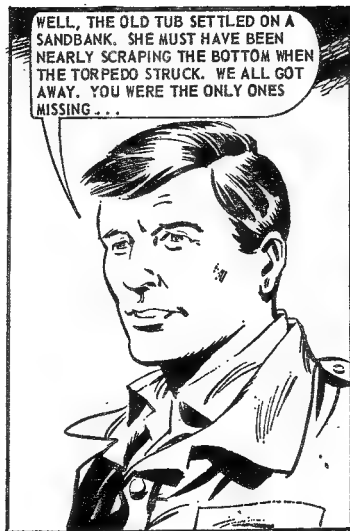
THEN MALONE AND THE OTHERS RECOGNISED THEIR RESCUER . . .

GOOD GRIEF !  
IT'S FOSTER !

ARCHIE FOSTER !  
WHAT ARE YOU DOING  
HERE ? I THOUGHT  
YOU WENT DOWN WITH  
THE REST OF THE  
BOYS ON THE  
'ESBERG' ?







MALONE KNEW THE ROUTE JACK VINCENT MEANT TO TAKE TO REACH THE QUAYSIDE . . .



MEANWHILE, THE AIRMAN HAD MANAGED TO REACH THE QUAYSIDE WITHOUT BEING SEEN, BUT THERE WERE GERMAN'S EVERYWHERE.



HE WAITED A LONG TIME, HIS NERVES ON EDGE. SUDDENLY HE HEARD A SOUND BEHIND HIM, AND HIS HEART MISSED A BEAT...

MALONE I WHAT  
THE HECK  
ARE YOU  
DOING HERE ?

LISTEN  
TO ME, SIR -  
YOU NEVER KILLED  
THOSE MEN. THE  
'ESBERG' NEVER SANK,  
AFTER ALL...

WHISPERING CLOSE TO THE FLYING OFFICER'S EAR,  
MALONE EXPLAINED WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

SO I'M NOT  
A KILLER  
AFTER ALL I  
AND YOU CAME  
AFTER ME  
JUST TO  
TELL ME ?

I COULDN'T  
LET YOU GO  
WITHOUT KNOWING,  
COULD I - SIR ?



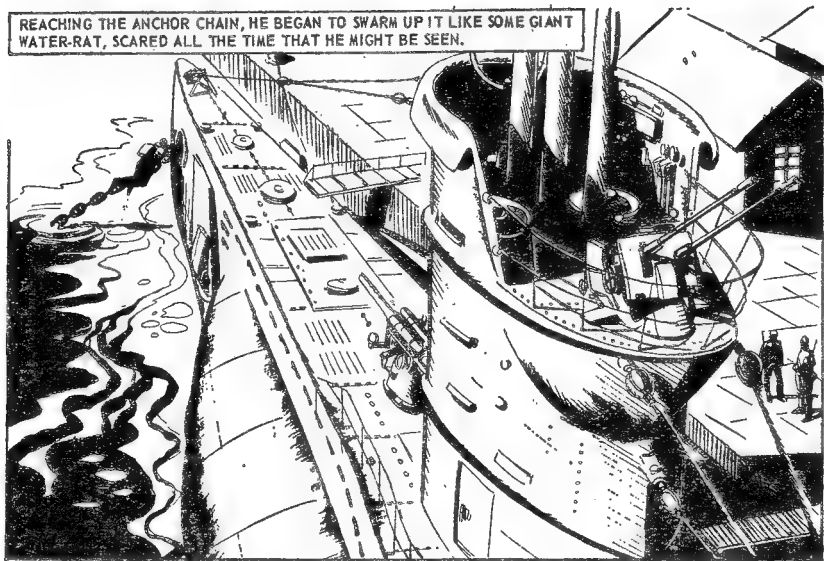
CHOOSING HIS MOMENTS CAREFULLY, JACK VINCENT SLIPPED FROM SHADOW TO SHADOW AMONG THE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT THAT LITTERED THE QUAYSIDE.



HE GINGERLY LOWERED HIMSELF INTO THE WATER AND SWAM TOWARDS THE U-BOAT ...



REACHING THE ANCHOR CHAIN, HE BEGAN TO SWARM UP IT LIKE SOME GIANT WATER-RAT, SCARED ALL THE TIME THAT HE MIGHT BE SEEN.



HE SQUEEZED THROUGH THE HAWSE-HOLE AND GROPED AROUND TILL HE FOUND THE EXIT INTO A PASSAGEWAY. HE MOVED ALONG IT, LOOKING FOR A WAY INTO THE HOLD WHERE THE EXPLOSIVES WOULD BE STACKED.



COMING TO A SHORT STAIRWAY, JACK PEERED DOWNWARDS. THEN HIS HEART LEAPT . . .



WITH HANDS THAT SHOOK A LITTLE, HE CLICKED ON THE TIMER WHICH HAD BEEN PRE-SET BY REED TO GO OFF IN TWENTY MINUTES. THEN HE PUSHED THE SATCHEL BETWEEN THE CASES...



HE STRAIGHTENED UP, IN A HURRY TO GET AWAY. AND THEN HIS LUCK RAN OUT! VOICES SOUNDED IN THE PASSAGEWAY, AND TWO OF THE U-BOAT'S OFFICERS CAME TO A HALT THERE, TALKING IN GERMAN.

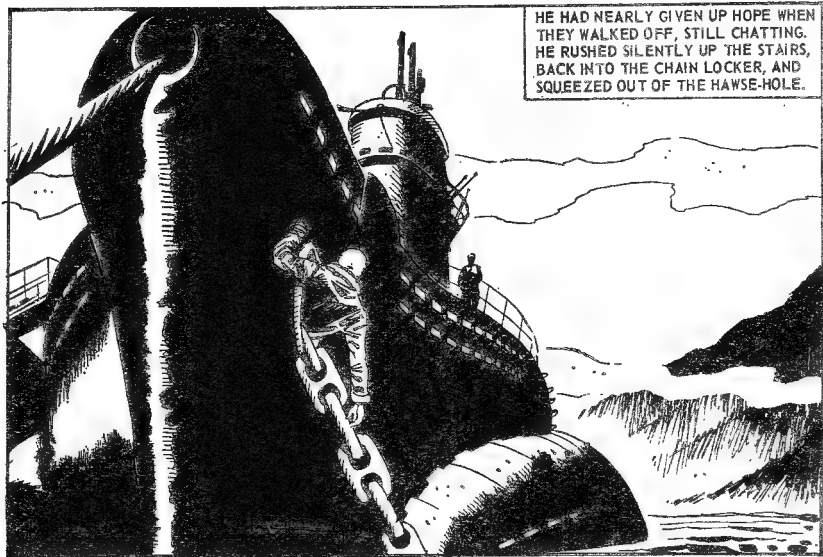


THEY STAYED FOR WHAT SEEMED AN ETERNITY. SWEAT BROKE OUT ON JACK VINCENT'S FOREHEAD. LIFE HAD BECOME VERY PRECIOUS TO HIM AGAIN . . .

WHAT SHALL  
I DO IF THEY  
STAY ? HOW LONG IS  
LEFT NOW . . . ?



HE HAD NEARLY GIVEN UP HOPE WHEN THEY WALKED OFF, STILL CHATTING. HE RUSHED SILENTLY UP THE STAIRS, BACK INTO THE CHAIN LOCKER, AND SQUEEZED OUT OF THE HAWSE-HOLE.





DRIVEN BY FEAR HE SWAM BACK TO THE QUAYSIDE, AND SCURRIED ALONG TO WHERE HE HAD LEFT MALONE.



IN THEIR HASTE, THEY ALMOST RAN HEAD ON INTO A SQUAD OF GERMAN SAILORS WHO CAME MARCHING AROUND THE CORNER OF THE SHED.



BEFORE A SINGLE ONE OF THEM COULD UNSLING HIS RIFLE, MALONE LET THEM HAVE A MURDEROUS BURST FROM HIS SCHMEISSER.

AAGH!



THEN THE TWO RACED OFF - INTO THE SHELTER OF THE MISTY NIGHT. FRANTIC SHOUTS OF ALARM WENT UP BEHIND THEM ...

ACHTUNG!  
ACHTUNG!  
ENGLANDERS...!



PURSUIT WAS LEFT FAR BEHIND - BUT JACK VINCENT WAS WORRIED.



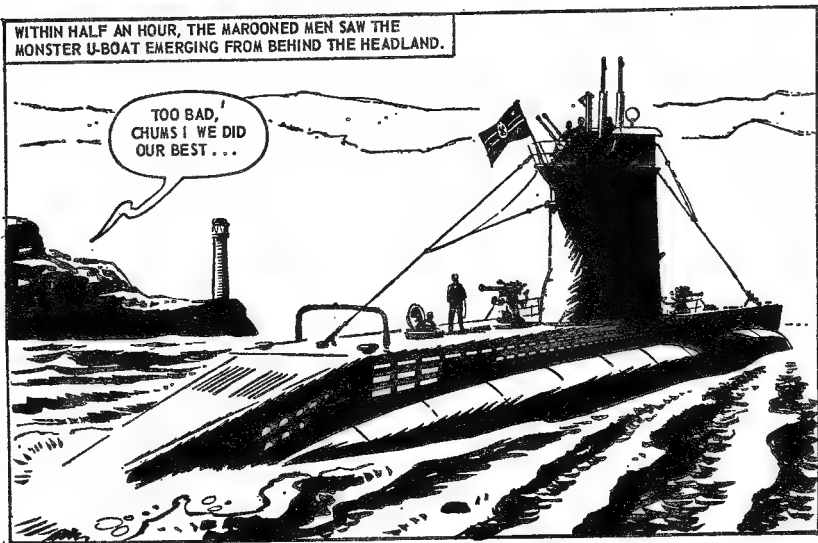
WHEN THEY GOT BACK WITH THE NEWS, KELSEY AND DALE BLAMED REED...



BUT JACK VINCENT, ALTHOUGH BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED, STUCK UP FOR THE ENGINEER.



WITHIN HALF AN HOUR, THE MAROONED MEN SAW THE MONSTER U-BOAT EMERGING FROM BEHIND THE HEADLAND.



JACK TURNED AWAY, BUT AN EXCITED YELL FROM MALONE BROUGHT HIM SPINNING AROUND. HE WAS JUST IN TIME TO SEE THE HUGE U-BOAT TORN APART BY A STUPENDOUS EXPLOSION. FLAME, SMOKE AND JAGGED METAL WAS HURLED SKYWARDS...

GLORY BE!  
WE DID IT!

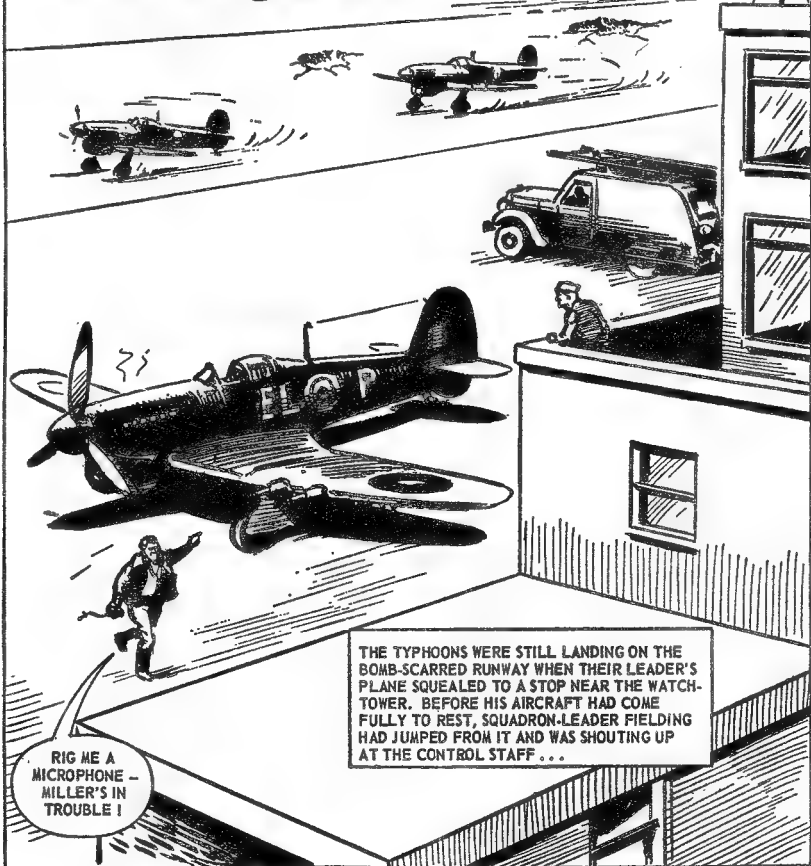
DOWN,  
CHAPS - BEFORE  
THE SHOCK WAVES  
HIT US!



THE ISLAND SEEMED TO SHUDDER WITH THE EFFECTS OF THE MAMMOTH EXPLOSION. A FEW MINUTES LATER, JACK VINCENT AND THE MEN WITH HIM WATCHED THE "IRON WHALE" MAKE ITS FIRST AND LAST DIVE. THEY HAD BEEN THROWN UP ON THE ISLAND WITHOUT A WEAPON BETWEEN THEM, BUT THEY HAD DESTROYED A THREAT THAT COULD HAVE BEEN DISASTROUS TO THE ALLIED ARMIES OF LIBERATION.



# MAXIMUM EFFORT



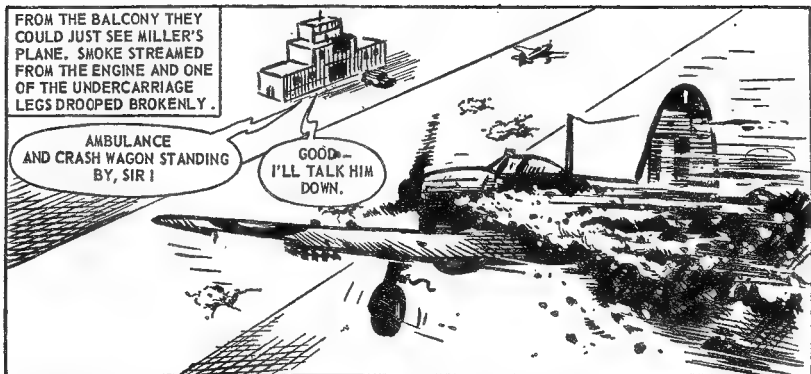
RIG ME A  
MICROPHONE -  
MILLER'S IN  
TROUBLE!

THE TYPHOONS WERE STILL LANDING ON THE BOMB-SCARRED RUNWAY WHEN THEIR LEADER'S PLANE SQUEALED TO A STOP NEAR THE WATCH-TOWER. BEFORE HIS AIRCRAFT HAD COME FULLY TO REST, SQUADRON-LEADER FIELDING HAD JUMPED FROM IT AND WAS SHOUTING UP AT THE CONTROL STAFF . . .

FROM THE BALCONY THEY COULD JUST SEE MILLER'S PLANE. SMOKE STREAMED FROM THE ENGINE AND ONE OF THE UNDERCARRIAGE LEGS DROOPED BROKENLY.

AMBULANCE AND CRASH WAGON STANDING BY, SIR!

GOOD— I'LL TALK HIM DOWN.



SQUADRON-LEADER FIELDING SPOKE TO THE YOUNG PILOT ON THE RADIO — HIS VOICE WAS CALM AND REASSURING...

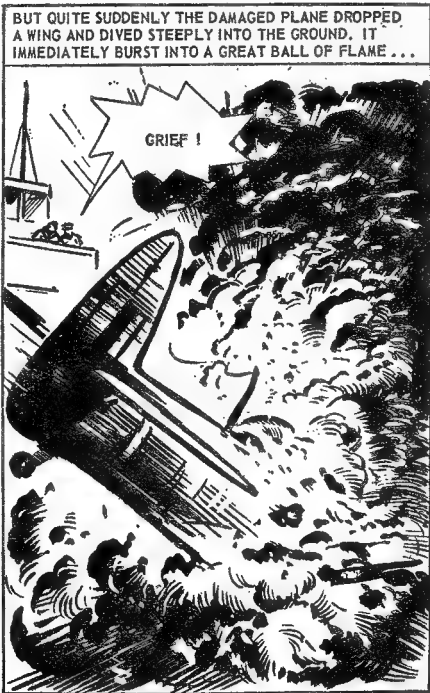
THIS IS SQUADRON-LEADER FIELDING — YOU'RE DOING FINE, MILLER. NOW CAN YOU JUST EASE OVER SO THAT YOU LAND ON THE GRASS AT THE SIDE OF THE RUNWAY?

R-RIGHT, SIR!



BUT QUITE SUDDENLY THE DAMAGED PLANE DROPPED A WING AND DIVED STEEPLY INTO THE GROUND. IT IMMEDIATELY BURST INTO A GREAT BALL OF FLAME...

GRIEF!





SQUADRON-LEADER FIELDING GAVE SOMEONE THE MICROPHONE AND TURNED AWAY, HIS FACE EXPRESSIONLESS...

NOBODY  
COULD SURVIVE  
THAT - THEY'LL  
JUST HAVE TO  
PICK UP THE  
PIECES.

HIS CONTROLS MUST  
HAVE BROKEN UP - HE DIDN'T  
STAND A CHANCE.

FIELDING WAS IN HIS OFFICE NEXT DAY WHEN A YOUNG PILOT OFFICER WAS SHOWN IN...

PILOT OFFICER  
HAINES, THE NEW  
REPLACEMENT,  
SIR.

AND VERY  
PROUD TO BE  
JOINING YOUR  
SQUADRON,  
SIR.

FIELDING NOTICED THAT THE YOUNG MAN  
BORE A RESEMBLANCE TO PILOT OFFICER  
MILLER WHO HAD DIED THE DAY BEFORE -  
BUT EVEN SO THE NEWCOMER DID NOT GET  
THE SPEECH OF WELCOME HE HAD EXPECTED.

WELL, I'M NOT  
HAPPY TO SEE YOU,  
HAINES. BECAUSE YOU'RE  
PROBABLY GOING TO DIE. AND  
I'M TIRED OF SEEING  
YOUNG PILOTS DIE.

HAINES COULD SEE THE FATIGUE AND THE STRAIN IN FIELDING'S FACE ...

I'VE GOT A D.S.O. AND A D.F.C. AND I'M SUPPOSED TO BE SOME SORT OF HERO. WELL, I'M NOT, AND I'VE HAD ENOUGH. I'M ASKING TO BE TAKEN OFF OPERATIONS. NOW GO AWAY, YOUNG MAN.



FIELDING'S ADJUTANT TRIED TO TALK HIM OUT OF RESIGNING HIS COMMAND, BUT THE SQUADRON-LEADER'S MIND WAS MADE UP ...

I'VE LOST TEN PILOTS IN TWO MONTHS, ADJ. THEY COME OUT HERE, RAW, INEXPERIENCED, AND THEY HAVE TO FLY ON OPERATIONS BECAUSE THERE'S NO-ONE ELSE. AND BEFORE THEY'VE GOT A CHANCE TO LEARN - THEY'RE DEAD!



BUT THAT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, ... SIR.

THEY WERE INTERRUPTED BY A RADIO MESSAGE.

IT'S FROM GROUP. THEY WANT YOU TO LAY ON A STRIKE - MAXIMUM EFFORT.

MAXIMUM EFFORT! ALL RIGHT - BUT THIS IS THE LAST TIME.



THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN TWELVE PLANES - BUT THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH PILOTS ...

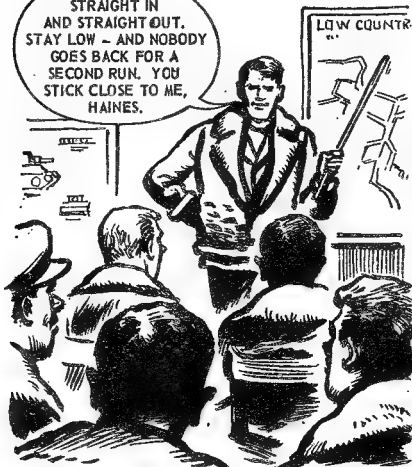
SHALL I PUT HAINES'S NAME DOWN?



WHY NOT? HE MAY AS WELL BE KILLED THIS WEEK AS NEXT.

FIELDING BRIEFED THEM ...

YOU GO  
STRAIGHT IN  
AND STRAIGHT OUT.  
STAY LOW - AND NOBODY  
GOES BACK FOR A  
SECOND RUN. YOU  
STICK CLOSE TO ME,  
HAINES.

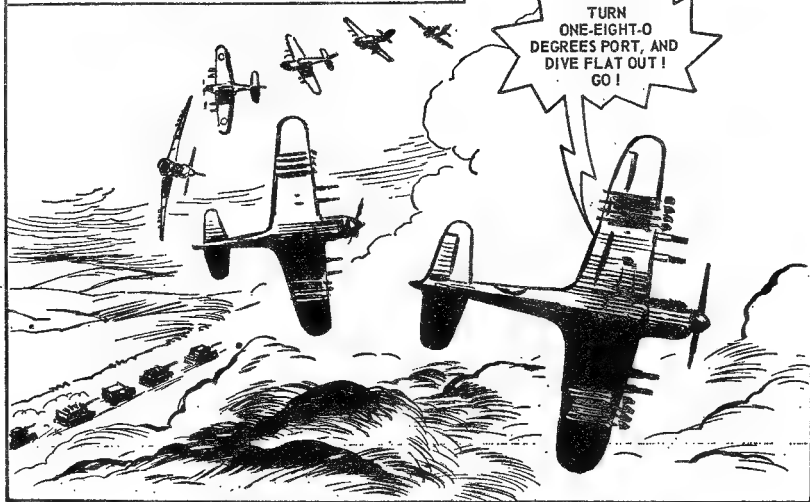


THEY TOOK OFF AND HEADED NORTH-EAST. IT WAS  
A TOUGH TARGET - ON THE BORDERS OF GERMANY.



THEN FIELDING SPOTTED THEIR TARGET. HE FLEW STRAIGHT  
PAST IT AS IF HE HAD NO INTENTION OF ATTACKING ...

TURN  
ONE-EIGHT-O  
DEGREES PORT, AND  
DIVE FLAT OUT!  
GO!



THEY DIVED STEEPLY WITH THE SPEED INCREASING ALL THE TIME.  
HAINES WAS CLOSE TO FIELDING ~ TOO CLOSE ...



FARTHER  
OUT, HAINES -  
GIVE YOURSELF  
MORE ROOM !

EVEN AS THEY HURTL ALONG AT GROUND LEVEL WITH  
THE TREES RUSHING PAST AT OVER 400 m.p.h., FIELDING  
FOUND TIME TO WATCH OVER OTHERS ...



GET DOWN, HAINES !  
BELOW THE TREES SO  
THAT THEY COVER YOU !

THE FLAK WAS PUMPING AT THEM IN GREAT STREAMS  
OF LIGHT, AND THEIR CANNON WERE HAMMERING BACK ...

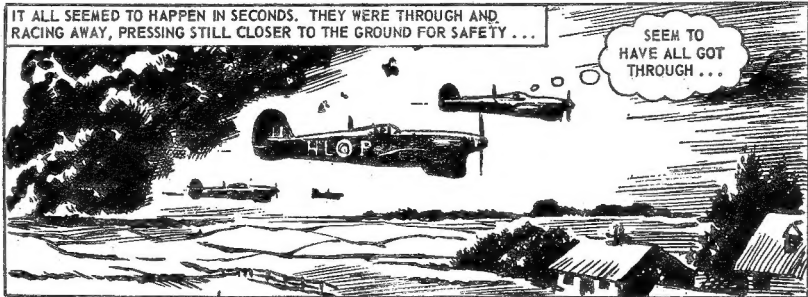


THERE WAS A CRASH LIKE THUNDER AS THE PLANES FIRED THEIR ROCKETS ...



IT ALL SEEMED TO HAPPEN IN SECONDS. THEY WERE THROUGH AND RACING AWAY, PRESSING STILL CLOSER TO THE GROUND FOR SAFETY ...

SEEM TO  
HAVE ALL GOT  
THROUGH ...



IT HAD BEEN A VERY SUCCESSFUL OPERATION. BACK AT THEIR AERODROME, FIELDING WALKED OVER TO CONGRATULATE HAINES ...

YOU DID WELL.

THANKS TO YOU,  
SIR. I WONDER IF I MIGHT  
SHOW YOU A LETTER FROM  
PILOT OFFICER MILLER - HE  
WAS MY COUSIN, THAT'S WHY  
WE LOOK ALIKE.



THE LETTER HAD BEEN SENT A WEEK BEFORE MILLER HAD DIED. IT SAID A LOT ABOUT FIELDING . . .

"THE SQUADRON-LEADER IS OBVIOUSLY HURT BY THE DEATHS OF HIS YOUNG PILOTS. HE DOES ALL HE CAN TO PROTECT AND HELP US. I WISH I COULD TELL HIM THAT WE KNOW MANY OF US HAVE TO DIE IF WE ARE TO END THIS BEASTLY WAR."



THERE WAS A LOT MORE, BUT HAINES DID NOT READ IT ALL . . .

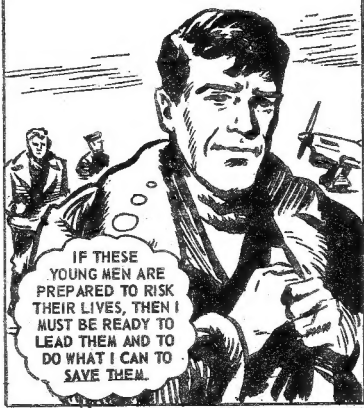
I WONDER IF YOU'D LIKE THIS LETTER, SIR. HE WAS VERY PROUD THAT HE HAD BEEN IN YOUR SQUADRON.

THANK YOU, HAINES.



HE READ THE LETTER CAREFULLY AND SLOWLY AND WHEN HE FINISHED, HE KNEW THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO TEAR UP HIS RESIGNATION . . .

IF THESE YOUNG MEN ARE PREPARED TO RISK THEIR LIVES, THEN I MUST BE READY TO LEAD THEM AND TO DO WHAT I CAN TO SAVE THEM.



Published each month by IPC Magazines Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Printed by Fleetway Printers, Gravesend, Kent. Subscription Rates: £8.00 for 96 numbers, £4.00 for 48 numbers. Enquiries to: IPC Magazines Ltd. (Subscriptions Dept.), Tower House, Southampton Street, London, WC2E 9QX. Sole Agents: Australia and New Zealand, Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; South Africa, Central News Agency, Ltd.; Rhodesia and Zambia, Kingstons, Ltd. WAR PICTURE LIBRARY is sold subject to the following conditions, that it shall not without the written consent of the Publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price shown on the cover; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition, or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever. SG

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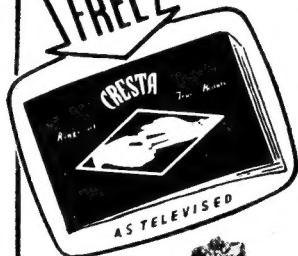
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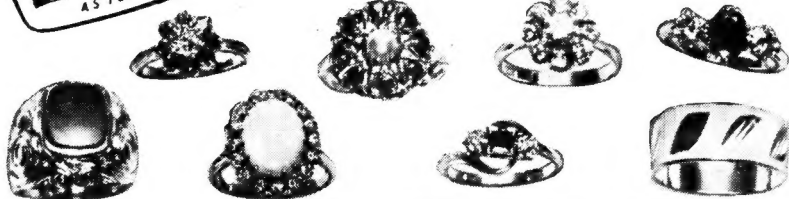
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